

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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April 14, 2005

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Bryce Yokomizo, Director

SUBJECT: **STATUS REPORT ON DPSS RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF CALWORKS (CORE) REPORT ON DPSS SOCIAL SERVICES DESIGNED TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

This is to provide you with a status report on my department's activities relative to the CORE Report on CalWORKs Specialized Supportive Services, since our last report dated January 18, 2005.

BACKGROUND

On November 10, 2003, the Commission for Public Social Services (PSS) submitted its Committee Report and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. On January 15, 2004, we provided your Board with our response to that report and committed to provide quarterly status reports on activities outlined in the action plan to enhance the delivery of CalWORKs specialized supportive services. This is our fifth report to the Board.

STATUS REPORT

1. Study on Sanctions

The Chief Administrative Office's (CAO) Service Integration Branch (SIB) completed its first report of the Sanction Study in April 2005. The report, "Study of Sanctions Among CalWORKs Participants in the County of Los Angeles: Who, When, and Why?", identifies the County's sanctioned population and analyzes the sanction rates during the period of April 2002 to February 2004. To address the report's findings, an internal workgroup is already in place and an external stakeholders' group is being formed to develop sanction-related interventions/strategies. Out of those processes, my department will develop an action plan and share it with your Board in July 2005.

2. GAIN Home Visit Outreach

In March 2005, the pilot, which targets participants with a history of substance abuse, mental health and/or domestic violence, was expanded to include all participants who are at risk of, or have a recommended/imposed, first instance sanction. For participants with a previously identified service need, pilot results continue to be promising, with approximately 57% of participants with whom contact has been established, positively resolving the compliance issue. An evaluation report, including results on the general population, is targeted for release by CAO's SIB in early 2006.

3. Follow-Up Activities by Service Providers

As previously reported, the Enhanced Services of the Community Assessment Service Center (CASC) pilot, which provides participants the opportunity to self-disclose and discuss service needs directly with CASC outreach staff, was implemented in the East and West San Fernando Valley on November 1, 2004, and the West County GAIN Region on December 1, 2004. In addition, in March 2005, the pilot was expanded to include the San Gabriel Valley GAIN Region. Pilot activities through February 2005 have resulted in 77 referrals to clinical assessment.

As you know, in late 2004, we automated the mailing of quarterly progress reports to enhance communication with service providers. Management reports are produced monthly. Staff and providers continue to report that these automated reports have enhanced communication and case management activities.

4. Utilization of Professional Staff

On March 11, 2005, the Department of Human Resources posted an open-competitive bulletin for Staff Development Specialist, Social Work. As you may recall, this is the classification that will be used for the seven (7) staff with a Master's Degree in Social Work (MSW). Recruitment efforts are underway and candidates will be selected upon promulgation of an eligible list. We anticipate beginning to fill the vacancies in May 2005.

5. Monitoring Effectiveness

As previously reported, we have taken various measures to enhance my department's monitoring of the Specialized Supportive Services Program. These efforts include enhancing our data tracking system, invoice reconciliation, and incorporating performance requirements in our Memoranda of Understanding with our partnering departments. In addition to the above, we continue to regularly assess existing data

and identify best practices across individual DPSS offices to evaluate the effectiveness and utilization of supportive services.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS TO ENHANCE THE SPECIALIZED SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM

Beginning later this month, my department will form a workgroup of partners and stakeholders, including key representatives from other County departments, service providers, advocates and the Commission for Public Social Services, to assess additional enhancement opportunities beyond the above five-point action plan.

The workgroup will focus on four (4) major areas as follows: 1) Identification and Referral; 2) Engagement; 3) Completion; and 4) Outcomes. These are the same four (4) areas addressed by the California Institute for Mental Health (CIMH) Study published in January 2005, which documented the effects of providing mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence to CalWORKs participants in Los Angeles County.

The study cites that the "supportive services system in Los Angeles has done a good job of increasing access to services, particularly with certain subpopulations. Despite this, there is a continuing need to experiment with new ways of identifying clients, particularly those populations that are difficult to engage."

In addition to focusing on the CIMH report findings and recommendations, the workgroup will engage in discussions relative to planning implications for future program enhancements. These include: alternative screening instruments; potential outreach opportunities to dispel the stigma associated with specialized supportive services, which may prevent participants from seeking services; development of unique welfare-to-work opportunities for participants with supportive services needs; and best practices across the State in the delivery of specialized supportive services.

I will provide you with an update on the above activities in July 2005.

BY:lc

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Chairman, Commission for Public Social Services
Director, Department of Mental Health
Director, Department of Health Services
Director, Community and Senior Services